

Weekly Column for September 30, 2004

Rain, rain, go away, come again another day. Ahhh, it's October, which means a few things. First- it's almost cold. Secondly, it's almost ready to snow. And third, I will be rooting for the Yankees to win the World Series (anybody but Boston).

There is of course a fourth happening, and that is we have reached the point where I will release my first budget as mayor. I will not say it was a daunting task, but it certainly was not too much fun. I just wanted those who read this column on a weekly basis to have an idea of what we had to deal with, and what we came up with.

Several of our costs- healthcare, retirement, contractual raises and insurance- are off the charts. Those costs have risen to record levels, some as much as a 20 percent increase over the previous year. We realized this early on in our budget preparation, and asked that department heads cut 7 percent out of the budget for 2005. It was no easy task.

But each department head did his or her best to cut down on expenditures. While we truly believe that our revenues will begin to rise in the coming years, it is much too early to budget for something like that. One of my campaign promises was to limit the tax burden that property owners- particularly residents- have to bear. I never forgot that promise, and despite bleak conditions with the fixed cost raises, I believe we have done an outstanding job in limiting the burden taxpayers will have to carry next year.

And while we did our fair share of cutting, no people were cut from jobs, just vacant positions. I also cut several appointed positions that I would have had the opportunity to put people into. The former mayor often talked about his "bare-bones budget." That really was never the case, but the budget I will present tomorrow, is as close to bare bones as humanly possible. That is my pledge to the people of Troy.

Now that that is out of the way, I wanted to clear something up about last week's charity softball game at The Joe and end on a happy note. For those who did not make it out, I had the shortest pitching performance in the history of the game. One pitch.

In a clear attempt at a joke, I sailed the first pitch to Rensselaer County over the head of the batter. At that point, Deputy Mayor Dan Crawley, acting manager, walked out the mound and pulled me out of the game. What a travesty. I assure you all, Dan will be dealt with.

As for the game, the City of Troy lost 10-4, but we are protesting the game, claiming that Rensselaer County manager Bob Krogh (also a City Councilman for you district 5 voters), may have used illegal players. If this is the case, we will make sure that Hideki Matsui is a City employee next year.

Have a wonderful weekend, autumn is upon us, and make sure you enjoy it before that white stuff starts to fall.